

ACCIDENTS IN 1932.

IF not attaining the total of 1931, the number of accidents during the season of 1932 was yet deplorably high. During June and the whole of July weather and conditions were of the worst—so bad, indeed, that even ‘modern’ climbers were confined to the valleys, not, perhaps, from want of enterprise or common sense, but from sheer lack of visibility. These causes doubtless reduced accidents to a minimum during the early period, but with the advent of August and its magnificently clear and hot days, mishaps and calamities resumed their fatal sway and, as usual, such were not confined to the irresponsible proletariat.

The season of 1932 will be remembered as resulting in two great disasters to the English-speaking race. Neither occurred in the Alps: Allen Carpe perished in the snows of North America’s highest mountain; Gino Watkins in the icy waters of the Arctic Ocean. Great mountain-explorers and great leaders, young in years but old in renown, their names will live.

The Alpine Club has lost yet another member in the person of Lt.-Col. Stoeckert, whose death appears to have been caused by one of those accidents at times almost unavoidable in even normal Himalayan snow conditions.

Of another kind, but equally regretted, was the death of Toni Schmid (1909–1932). Unknown to fame in July, the exploit of the brothers was broadcast to the world on August 4, 1931. The Grosse Wiesbachhorn disaster is yet another proof that the bravest are not infallible. Alas, to quote a great performer in another form of sport, ‘. . . it was written in the book.’

To many of the other Alpine catastrophes the twin curses of modern mountaineering contribute—Competition and Records.

There were many accidents, fatal and otherwise, in the Mont Blanc Group. In fact, during the fine-weather period of August these were of almost daily occurrence. The same was, of course, the case in the Eastern Alps, Wilde Kaiser and Tauern Groups especially.

One of the most tragic occurred on the Aiguille du Géant, where out of a party of six young Italians four perished by a fall near the upper ropes, the others escaping only by the breaking of the climbing rope. If reports are to be believed, only one of the party exceeded 20 years of age. The Z’mutt ridge of the Matterhorn, said to have been in bad condition during the whole season, was responsible for two disasters involving at least four deaths. Two well-known guides were killed—Albert Simon and the gallant veteran Alphonse Payot of Chamonix.¹

¹ Simon was reported killed on the Aiguille de l’M; other press reports stated on the Aiguille de la République—a very different proposition. Payot’s accident, a fall in the Nant Favre torrent, was incidental to his advanced age.

Other accidents were reported as follows: Belledonne, Aiguille de l'M, Petit Dru (N. face), Aiguille Verte, Mont Blanc, Aiguille de Bionnassay,² Finsteraarhorn, Jäghorn, Silvrettas, Munt Pers, Totenkirchl, Predigstuhl, Gross Glockner, Monte Civetta, etc. Four Austrians perished on Ushba.

We might add that the accounts of Alpine accidents, as reported even in the reputable British press, surpassed in wild improbability anything we have hitherto read.

There are signs of a return to sanity. The Chamonix Alpine Congress expressed its strongest disapproval of 'stunt shows' in the Alps. The lay press, which by stimulating personal rivalry as a controlling element in mountain adventure achieved so ill a turn to our craft, is showing symptoms of reaction. Responsible Alpine periodicals of all nationalities are adopting the view that to do or die is not the reasonable goal of mountaineering. But in this country we still from time to time, in publications more or less connected with climbing, come across incompetent reviewers who have yet to learn that mountaineering is something greater and better than another form of competitive sport.

The Accident on the Aiguille de la Glière.

'ON August 23, four young men, two of them junior officers of *Chasseurs Alpains* and Engineers, set out to climb the Aiguille de la Glière.³ The two civilians were brothers, and the party was roped in pairs, one civilian and one soldier. They had completed the ascent and were descending the peak when, through inexperience, they got on to a part of it where no guide would dream of going. Apparently a rock gave way beneath the leading couple, who fell about 300 ft. and were killed on the spot. The others were able to retrace their steps and return to the Refuge Félix Faure on the Col de la Vanoise. The victims were Lieutenant Maurice Ribière and M. Henri Feltz. The task of recovery of the bodies was a very difficult one, and took about 8 hours before the guides could lower them on to the moraine below the rocks.

'The accident took place on the W. side of the Aiguille, that facing the Lac des Vaches. The young men were three parts of the way down when the fall occurred on the lower cliffs.⁴

'The accident plunged Pralognan into gloom, the deeper because everyone felt that two young lives had been sacrificed to the old

² An eye-witness (from the Tête Rousse hut) gave us an account, but under the very obscure circumstances we prefer *not* to publish it.

³ The *Aiguille* is a small peak composed of very rotten rock. It is connected by the so-called Col de la Glière with the far loftier and firm *Pointe*, 3386 m.

⁴ The site of the disaster must be very near the place of the 1923 accident to Colonel L. C. F. Oppenheim, *A.J.* 35, 314-17.

fatal act of rashness. The victims were interred by the Bishop of the Tarentaise at Pralognan.'—*Communication* from Mrs. Carruthers ('Violet Markham').

The Accident on the Spitzmauer.

ON May 29, 1932, a party consisting of Herren S. Günther, S. Eitzenberger and F. Kaschka set out to attempt the ascent of the difficult N. face of the Spitzmauer, 8205 ft., in the Todtes Gebirg.⁵ While *en route*, Günther [found the ascent too difficult for his powers and stayed behind], or unroped himself without the knowledge of the leader, Eitzenberger. [The others, however, refused to give up the undertaking, tied their late companion firmly to the rocks and proceeded with the climb, having promised Günther to fetch him on the way down.] In the meantime a terrible snowstorm broke over the mountain, compelling Eitzenberger and Kaschka to descend to the 'valley' [without being able to bring the belayed Günther down. The latter, owing to the storm, appears to have been blown from his resting-place and remained hanging on the rope in the air. For 30 hours he remained in this position, it being impossible for help to reach him].

A search-party, summoned by Eitzenberger and Kaschka, attained the Priel hut at 02.30 on May 30. Led by Eitzenberger, the party endeavoured to reach Günther, but in the face of a hurricane, 6 inches of fresh snow, and thick cloud, were obliged to return from the so-called Klinerscharte. During all the time the search-party was out, shouts from Günther could be heard. In order to keep up the marooned climber's spirits, a sort of outpost was left to reply by shouts and whistling to the victim's cries.

At 18.00 hours on the same evening a further search-party of five arrived, but in the meantime weather and conditions had worsened even further, the snowfall now amounting to 1½ feet. Nothing in the way of rescue could be attempted before an improvement in the weather, while Günther's cries had ceased about 16.00. On May 31 the rescue party again reached the Klinerscharte, but continuous avalanches and stones rendered all close approach to the icy N. face impossible. Günther could be seen hanging on the rope, while his rucksack had fallen to the base of the rocks. The search-party had accomplished their utmost. Some idea of the conditions on the mountain may be gathered from the facts that Günther's companions reached the Priel hut in *Kletterschuhe* and still wearing the rope, the latter being so frozen that they were unable to free themselves, while eye-witnesses noticed that the rope in which the victim was

⁵ We owe the account of what followed to the *Allgemeine Bergsteiger Zeitung* and *Bergkamerad* respectively. The narrative as related in the former emanates from one of the search-parties, while that of the latter we include in brackets.—*Editor*.

hanging was covered with ice to the thickness of a man's arm. ['The story, if correctly reported, is almost too tragic to be credible.']

The Accident on the Grosse Wiesbachhorn.

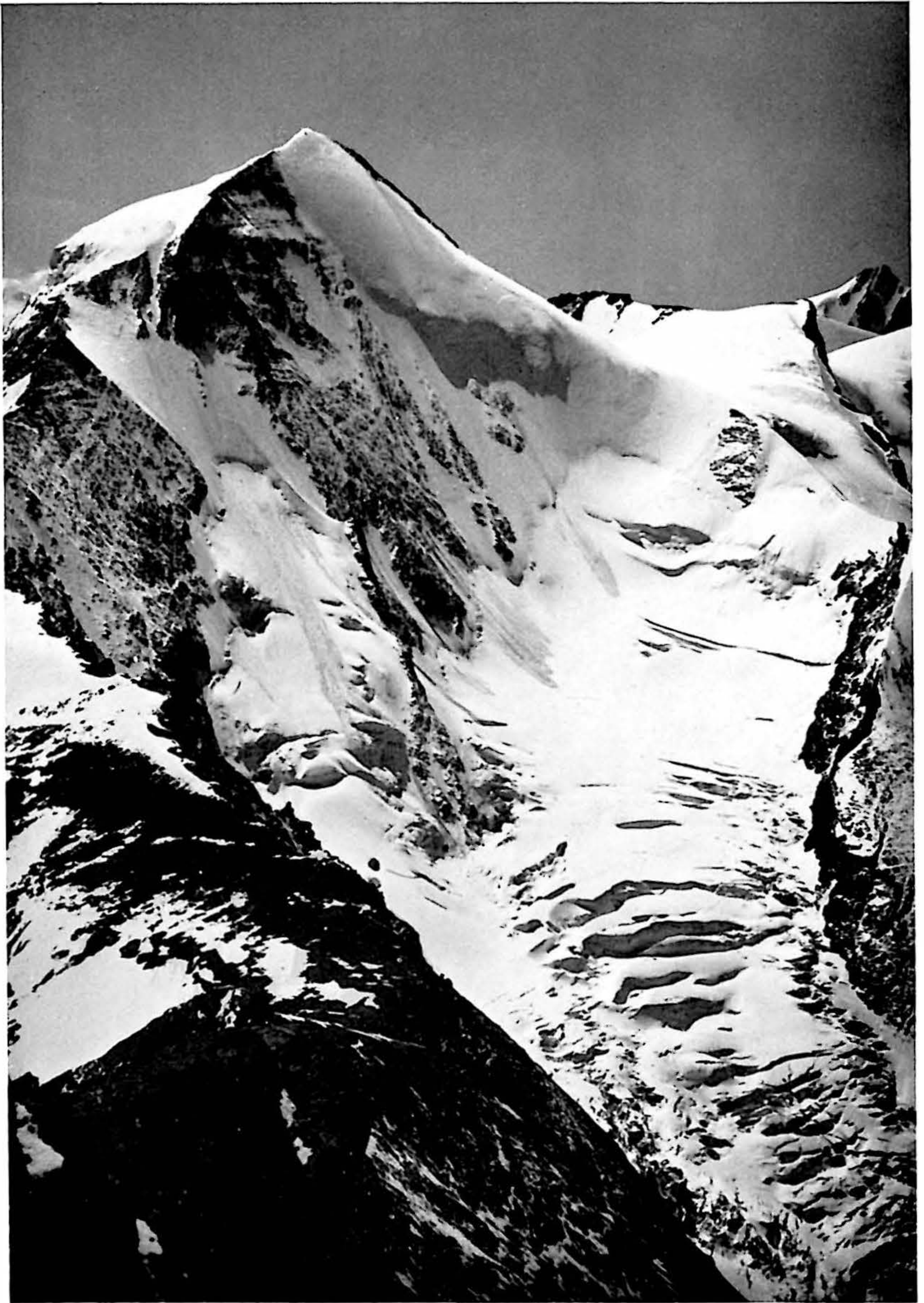
ON May 16, 1932, a party consisting of three Graz mountaineers, Herren Karl and Emil Rupilius and Karl Schreiner, left the Schwaigerhaus, 2802 m., above the Kaprun valley at 04.00 to try the ascent of the difficult N.W. face of the Gr. Wiesbachhorn (3570 m. = 11,710 ft.). This face,⁶ over 2000 ft. in height, consists of a névé and ice slope at a general angle of about 50°, interrupted in its upper half by a great and nearly vertical ice-bulge. The party abandoned their skis on the Oberer Fochezkopf, 3165 m., found good snow on the lower portion of the N.W. face and arrived quickly at the base of the bulge. Here they came on much ice—the dreaded *Wassereiss*—and worked hard for 2 hours without gaining much height. Their intention was either to climb the bulge direct, or, failing this, to turn it by an apparently easier line to the left, N. While at work they were being overhauled by another party consisting of the Munich climbers, Herren Toni Schmid⁷ and Ernst Krebs, who had started from Mooserboden. This latter party, by shouting, informed the others that they intended to turn the great step by bearing round its base.

The Austrian party, after lengthy manœuvres on the bulge, in the course of which it proved impossible to fix pitons owing to the splintering of the extremely steep ice, eventually changed their plans, descended a little diagonally and joined the tracks of the Bavarians, who had rapidly overtaken them. These latter, owing to evil conditions, had kept well to the left, and were about 300–350 ft. above the Austrians in the margin between the ice-bulge and a rock rib. The short traverse was accomplished duly by the Austrians, and these latter, at about 13.00, turned straight up, the Bavarians being then concealed by the bulge. Suddenly stones and icicles, accompanied by two hats, hurtled downwards, followed immediately by the roped bodies of Schmid and Krebs, which bounded down an icy, rock-interspersed gully some 40–50 ft. distant from the Austrians. In a flash the bodies disappeared from view, being descried later some 1600 ft. lower down, lying on the fan of an avalanche-shoot, at the base of the N.W. face.

The Austrians, by means of ice pitons, descended the steep slopes as quickly as possible. Much step-cutting proved necessary, while the afternoon sun rendered the surface extremely dangerous. About 17.30 they attained the avalanche débris where the bodies were lying. Krebs, soon after the arresting of his fall, had been shouting

⁶ See the admirable 1 : 25,000 D. & Oe. A.-V. map, 'Glockner Gruppe.'

⁷ Of Matterhorn, N. face, fame. *A.J.* 43, 358–60 ; 44, 69–74.



Photo, Ernst Baumann.]

THE N.W. FACE OF THE GR. WIESBACHHORN.
(Scene of accident is vertically beneath summit under the ice bulge.)

[To face p. 348.]



Photo, W. Bellows.]

TONI (*right*) AND FRANZ SCHMID.
(Zermatt, August 1931.)

for help. He was found very seriously injured,⁸ but Toni Schmid, lying head downwards some 30 ft. below, was stone-dead. In his right hand he was still clutching a broken axe, round which a whole collection of rope-rings was frapped. Krebs informed the Austrians that Schmid, who was leading, had slipped, and, despite anchorage by the former's axe, dragged his companion down with him.⁹

Hardly had ropes and crampons been removed from the bodies, when down came an avalanche, sweeping the corpse some distance lower and causing still further injuries. Another smaller avalanche had previously damaged and scattered the sacks left behind by the Austrian party before their attempt. Krebs was dragged in all haste from out of the line of fire to the surface of the Wielingerkees. Dr. K. Rupilius, having fetched warm clothing, food, etc., from the Bavarians' sacks, stayed with the wounded man all night, while the others hurried to the Schwaigerhaus to obtain help from the valley. Fortunately food was plentiful, and Krebs could be wrapped in a tent [? sack], while Karl Rupilius, a qualified doctor, had a small cooking apparatus and a few medicaments.

In the hut, attained during the night, Emil Rupilius and Schreiner met two other parties, four persons in all, who had arrived most unexpectedly with designs on the same climb. On the following day these hurried up to the wounded man, arriving there at 07.00, Schreiner meanwhile descending the valley for more help, while Rupilius obtained the necessary rope, slings, transport material and food from Mooserboden. In all, eleven volunteers, by means of a sledge constructed of skis, contrived to bring Krebs (who had stood the night's exposure well) down the steep surface of the Wielinger Glacier to the Schwaigerhaus, where they arrived about 17.00 on May 17.

The body of Schmid was brought down to the valley by a further party of 17, consisting of guides and volunteers. The weather had completely broken before the arrival of either party to shelter.—Abridged from the *Allgemeine Bergsteiger Zeitung*.

Krebs, thanks to a good constitution, is said to be recovering slowly. His escape in the first instance was miraculous, but he owes his life entirely to the splendid conduct of the Rupilius party and the devotion of the other rescue caravans.

The Accident on the Gross Glockner.

HERR PETER EPP of Vienna had started out to attempt the so-called *Pallavicinirinne* (N.E. gully of the Gross Glockner, leading from the Pasterze Glacier *via* the Inneres Glocknerkar to the

⁸ He was quite blind for the time, the swelling of contusions entirely concealing his eyes.

⁹ Another account says that Schmid, in leaning backwards to obtain or fix an ice piton, lost his balance and fell.

Glocknerscharte lying between the lower, 3783 m., and main peak, 3798 m.) entirely alone. He is said to have been a skilful and experienced mountaineer. In the Hofmanns-hütte he met Herren E. Mitterhuber and J. Leitner of Berchtesgaden, both quite inexperienced in ice work. As both of these beginners intended to try the same route as himself, Epp considered it safer to join up with these total strangers. On August 13 the incongruous party started out for the climb. Progress up the steep and exposed gully was slow, in spite of excellent conditions, but, nevertheless, early in the morning the party had attained a spot about 100 ft. below the *Glocknerscharte*. From this spot they spoke with a guide descending with his party by the ordinary route. Epp, leaving the gully, attempted to reach the top by the rocks of the main peak. Finding the difficulties too great, one of the Berchtesgaden young men endeavoured to return to the couloir. He slipped and fell, dragging the rest of the party down.

The bodies were found 3000 ft. below.

It is stated that this is the first fatal accident that has occurred in the *Pallavicinirinne*.—From *Der Bergsteiger*.

[The *Pallavicinirinne* was first climbed on August 18, 1876, by the Marquis Alfred Pallavicini (A.C.), with the Heiligenblut guides Kramser, Bäuerle and another. (Pallavicini was himself killed on the Glocknerwand, together with the rest of his party, on June 25, 1886, 'A.J.' 13, 54-5, 110-13.) The ascent was not repeated for many years, but has now become very fashionable. If good snow is found in the long couloir the difficulties are not too serious, but the risk from falling stones is great.]

The Accident near Panjtarni, Kashmir.

[THE following account has been compiled from notes kindly supplied by Major K. C. Hadow, M.C., and Major R. V. M. Garry, M.C., R.A.]

Lt.-Col. C. F. Stoehr had been climbing and trekking in Kashmir for three weeks, when he joined Captain D. McK. Burn, R.E., and his wife at Pahlgam. After two days' march, the party spent the night of August 11-12, 1932, about two miles N. of Vaojan at an altitude of 12,800 ft. It was decided that Mrs. Burn should take the camp by the path northwards to Panjtarni or Dardkut, while Stoehr, Burn, a shikari and a tiffin coolie were to traverse Pt. 17,243 ($75^{\circ} 32' 30''$ E., $34^{\circ} 8' 10''$ N.), descending on the N. side on to the glacier which runs in a N.W. direction towards Dardkut. Bad weather came on, and the final ascent had to be abandoned.

They were then on the ridge running W. from Pt. 17,243 and at a height of about 16,500 ft. The shikari and tiffin coolie had only grass shoes on and could not attempt the descent on to the above

glacier. So they were sent back with the climbers' spare clothes, tiffin basket, etc., round by the way Mrs. Burn had gone.

The slope down which Stoehr and Burn descended faced N. and consisted chiefly of steep rock. At the bottom the strata ran down with the slope, a condition which would tend to instability of any snow liable to avalanche. It is not known whether this condition could be observed by climbers from above. The rock was generally rotten, and the glacier near by was strewn with fallen rock *débris*, but there were no snow *débris* from recent avalanches.

It is probable that the climbers were about 500 ft. below the crest on a large patch of snow, when part of the snow avalanched and carried them down about 1000 ft. on to the edge of the glacier. Death must have been instantaneous, as their heads were completely smashed.

The piece of snow which broke away was about 300 ft. long (down the slope) and from 100 ft. to 200 ft. broad (horizontally), being narrower at the top. The snow slipped off a more or less plane face of smooth rock. The depth of snow which avalanched was not more than about a foot. Judging by the normal warmth at 16,000 ft. on an August afternoon in that neighbourhood and the fact that it was raining, the snow would have been wet, and there may have been a film of water on the rock under the snow.

No traces leading towards the avalanche could afterwards be seen from below. The climbers had the full rope out (about 75 ft. clear) when they fell, and there was no possibility of one man being anchored on rock while the other crossed the snow, as the extent of the snow-field was too great. There did not appear to be any route down which avoided this snow. Provided all went well, there was no reason for Stoehr and Burn to have been hurrying down. Nor would it have been an excessively long way back up to the crest and so round by the way the shikari went. For the shikari, leaving the crest at about noon, reached camp at 6.0 P.M.; and the accident occurred shortly before 3.0 P.M., judging by Stoehr's watch, which had stopped. Thus, had Stoehr and Burn turned back at 2.45 P.M., they might have expected to be in by 10. Darkness came on at 7.30 P.M., but the moon, being nearly full, would have given some light. Although they had stated they would be in for tea, considerations of time were probably not important. Moreover, it now appears from a discovery by Mrs. Burn that neither Stoehr nor Burn had touched the food in their rucksacks, in fact it is clear that they never were near their rucksacks after about 9 A.M.

As regards acclimatization, Stoehr was fit and Burn had been leading a fairly active life at over 5200 ft. above sea-level. Both Stoehr and Burn had considerable knowledge of snow-craft. The former had climbed or skied (ski mountaineering) in the Alps and Kashmir both in summer and in winter. They would be expected to have recognized dangerous snow.

As the climbers had not returned by 6.0 P.M., when the shikari and

tiffin coolie reached camp, Mrs. Burn sent these two out as a search party. But it was too dark and dangerous owing to numerous crevasses for the Kashmiris to go far. Fearing an accident, Mrs. Burn sent a coolie to Pahlgam and another to Sonamarg. The latter had a dangerous gorge to traverse S. of Baltal. When the messages had been delivered, help was speedily forthcoming.

Major K. C. Hadow, M.C., deserves great credit for his energy. A telegram was sent at 12.00 noon from Srinagar on Sunday, August 14, to Major Hadow at Gulmarg. At 2.30 p.m. he left Gulmarg. It is 2000 ft. down by a path and then 93 miles by road to Pahlgam; yet by 7.30 p.m. he had left the latter place. Picking up a local man on the way, he reached Panjtarni at 4.0 a.m., after a 30-mile night march involving an ascent of 7000 ft. He organized a rescue party and left Mrs. Burn's camp before 6.0 a.m. Meanwhile the shikari had located the bodies, which were some 3000 ft. above the camp and over two miles up the glacier. Major Hadow reached camp with the bodies at 10.30 a.m., within 20 hours of leaving Gulmarg. The party reached Pahlgam at 7.45 p.m. the following evening.

Great praise is also due to the pluck and hard work of the shikari and coolies, to the assistance given by H.H. the Maharaja of Kashmir, the state officials and many Europeans, to the courtesy, kindness and sympathy shown by the pilgrims who passed the cortège on its way to Pahlgam, and, not least, to the courage shown by Mrs. Burn.

E. GUETERBOCK.

[We supplement Captain Gueterbock's account with the following report.]

Copy of official report by Major Hadow.

Srinagar, Kashmir.
August 17, 1932.

At about 5.30 a.m. on Friday morning, August 12, Colonel C. F. Stoehr, R.E., C.R.E., of the Delhi Brigade, and Captain D. M. Burn, R.E., of Meerut, accompanied by a shikari and a tiffin coolie, left their camp at an elevation of approximately 12,800 ft. and 2 miles beyond Vaojan, which is the pilgrims' halting place or camp on the march beyond (N.E. of) Shishram Nag Lake in the East Liddar Valley, and two marches beyond Pahlgam. They and Mrs. Burn had spent the night in camp there, having left Pahlgam two days earlier. They were on leave in Kashmir from the British Army in India, where both of them were serving in the Royal Engineers.

The arrangement on that day was that Mrs. Burn was to move the camp during the day, leaving at about 9 a.m. over the pass (13,840 ft.), and then pitch it close to the stream near Panjtarni or Dardkut, which is about 3 miles from the Amarnath caves.

Colonel Stoehr and Captain Burn, with the shikari and tiffin

coolie, intended to climb the 17,243 ft. mountain above the camp and descend on the N. or far side from the previous night's camp on to the long glacier ($2\frac{1}{2}$ miles in length) which runs in a N.W. direction towards Panjtarni. They were to join Mrs. Burn in the new camp near Panjtarni at about tea time or 5 P.M. When Colonel Stoehr and Captain Burn had reached the crest of the mountain ridge at a height of about 16,500 ft., the shikari requested them not to attempt to descend on the far side, saying that he had been to this place several times with other experienced mountain climbers, none of whom had ever attempted this descent.

In view of the shikari's strong protest at the danger of the proposed descent, and because the shikari and tiffin coolie were not wearing nailed climbing boots, but only grass shoes, Colonel Stoehr and Captain Burn are said to have told them to return by the way they had come, back to the old camp site, and then to join Mrs. Burn at Panjtarni. In order to leave themselves freer for climbing, Colonel Stoehr and Captain Burn also sent their spare warm clothing, tiffin basket with food, first-aid dressings and all extra kit back with the shikari and tiffin coolie, while they themselves proceeded to climb upwards¹⁰ and eastwards to the top of the mountain, which is 17,243 ft. high. The shikari and tiffin coolie arrived at Mrs. Burn's camp at about 6 P.M. and expressed surprise at not finding their sahibs already there. As there had been a heavy rain-storm with very strong winds during the day, Mrs. Burn began to become very anxious, especially as the climbers had no extra clothes nor climbing gear with them, nor any medical aids in case one of them had been hurt. Mrs. Burn therefore at once sent out the shikari and some coolies with a powerful petrol lamp up along the glacier to search for her husband and Colonel Stoehr.

It was an almost hopeless search at night time, as the glacier is a very broad one, more than $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles long, and is very broken up, with very deep crevasses overhung by steep mountains on both sides, from which many rocks must fall continuously—if one is to judge by the huge heaps and mounds of rocks and stones which fill the glacier valley. I consider it very brave of the shikari and coolies to have gone out at night on this glacier.

Mrs. Burn at once sent off a messenger to the manager of the hotel at Pahlgam, saying that she feared that an accident had occurred, because her husband and Colonel Stoehr were still out on the mountains, and had no warm clothes, nor food nor extra climbing gear, etc. She therefore asked for help to be sent out at once. This messenger reached Pahlgam on Saturday evening, August 13, and Captain Lander, late Royal Corps of Signals, and now Assistant Manager of the Army Agency, Srinagar, and Colonel Wells, R.A.M.C., of Rawalpindi, arranged to leave at daylight on Sunday morning.

¹⁰ This is not confirmed. The shikari also stated that Stoehr and Burn went straight down.—*E. G.*

There was a serious fire in the Pahlgam Hotel that night which needed everybody's assistance to extinguish it and prevented an early start by Colonel Wells and Captain Lander. Before they could set off, another messenger arrived with another letter from Mrs. Burn to Mrs. Harris at the Pahlgam Hotel, saying that her husband and Colonel Stoehr had been killed, and their dead bodies had been located by the shikari and coolies in a deep bergschrund in the side of the glacier below the mountain where they had been climbing. This letter is also said to have contained the words written by Mrs. Burn, "I am waiting to bring the bodies in." These words were meant by Mrs. Burn to convey the fact that she would wait at Panjtarni until the bodies could be rescued. The words are ambiguous, however, and were accepted universally in Pahlgam to mean that Mrs. Burn was on her way into Pahlgam with her servants, tents, ponies and coolies, bringing the bodies with her.

In view of the fact that Colonel Wells could not be of medical assistance, he decided not to go, but to wait at Pahlgam and do everything possible there as soon as the bodies arrived. Several other Englishmen who were also in Pahlgam similarly waited for and expected the arrival at any moment of Mrs. Burn and the bodies. Captain Lander, however, who was a friend of Captain and Mrs. Burn, set off at once in spite of not being well himself, hurrying to meet Mrs. Burn to try to assist and comfort her.

Meanwhile at Panjtarni very early on Saturday, Mrs. Burn had sent out the shikari and other coolies to search for Colonel Stoehr and Captain Burn. They located them high up on the side of the glacier at about 15,000 ft. elevation, in a deep hole. Mrs. Burn at once, upon receipt of this news, sent off the above-mentioned letter to Pahlgam, and another one to Dr. E. F. Neve, M.D., M.R.C.S., etc., who was in camp near Sonamarg, and who is a well-known mountaineer, asking for help from there also. This coolie traversed a route¹¹ which Dr. Neve describes as very dangerous at this time of year, and the said coolie deserves much credit. Dr. Neve telegraphed at once on Sunday morning to Major K. C. Hadow at Srinagar (because Major Hadow used to be Assistant Honorary Local Editor in Kashmir of the Himalayan Club of India), asking for help to be sent out at once to Pahlgam, and eight coolies from Pahlgam to Panjtarni, to help to bring in the bodies to Pahlgam. Dr. Neve replied to Mrs. Burn by her same coolie, saying that it was unfortunately impossible for him to come himself owing to the route being too dangerous for laden coolies, and stating that Major Hadow would send help from Srinagar.

Owing to it being Sunday, the telegram was delivered late in Srinagar to Mr. B. P. Wyllie, who opened it owing to Major Hadow's absence in Gulmarg for a week-end holiday. After consulting

¹¹ That is, *via* the Baltal gorge.—*E. G.*

Canon C. G. Stokoe, Chaplain of Srinagar, who had very recently returned from Pahlgam, Mr. Wyllie made all arrangements for a motor lorry to bring in the bodies, and after informing Major Hadow in Gulmarg by telegram, despatched at 12, of what had occurred, set off at once in a car for Pahlgam with Canon Stokoe. Before arriving there they were informed by two European gentlemen in a motor car that the bodies would probably reach Pahlgam before them, so they hurried on faster than ever and reached Pahlgam at about 4 P.M., finding that the bodies had not arrived, but were expected by everybody from moment to moment. The Governor of Kashmir, who was staying in Pahlgam for the day, had meanwhile done everything in his power to help Mrs. Burn, and had sent out his Tehsildar, Nahib Tehsildar, and many messengers and some police along the road to Mrs. Burn. His magnificent efforts were greatly appreciated and admired by all Englishmen in Pahlgam.

No further definite news had been received from Mrs. Burn, nor from any other source regarding her movements, nor was there any news of Captain Lander. It transpired next day that Captain Lander had reached Mrs. Burn at Panjtarni at 7 P.M., which is three full stages from Pahlgam, and involves climbing more than 7000 ft. of actual ascent. It is the climbing which involves the big delay in messengers getting through from Pahlgam to Panjtarni, because the distance is only 26 miles.

At 4 A.M. on Monday, August 15, having left Gulmarg at 2.30 P.M. and Pahlgam at 7.30 P.M. on Sunday, August 14, I, Major Hadow (accompanied by a man whom I collected from Tanin or Tsandwar), reached Mrs. Burn's camp at Panjtarni, and then set off quickly, shortly before 6 A.M., with the shikari and twelve coolies, to bring the bodies to camp and then to take them to Pahlgam on improvised stretchers which Captain Lander had made on Sunday night. Captain Lander and Mrs. Burn packed up the camp and all luggage on to ponies and coolies and proceeded to Pahlgam, which they reached at about 4 P.M. on Monday afternoon.

I and the rescue party proceeded up the long glacier to the place pointed out to us by the shikari, and after some difficulty owing to the place, we extracted the bodies of first Colonel Stoehr and then that of Captain Burn, from below Colonel Stoehr deeper down in the bergschrund. It was a long climb and walk, because camp at Panjtarni is at about 12,000 ft., and the bodies were found at 15,000 ft. Also progress along the glacier was slow owing to numerous crevasses, partly hidden by snow. The coolies and shikari behaved splendidly.

The bodies were carried back to camp at Panjtarni, which was reached at 10.30 A.M. From a careful examination of the mountain above the scene of the tragedy, it seemed clear to me that the accident had occurred 1000 ft. above where the bodies were found.

After ordering the shikari and tiffin coolie back from the col or

ridge at 10 A.M.,¹² Colonel Stoehr and Captain Burn had apparently climbed up ¹³ eastward to the top of the mountain, which is 17,243 ft., and is found on the Survey of India Map, Sheet 43, N 12, Square A 2, and about one mile S.W. of the 17,862 ft. mountain marked and named 'Nichhang' on the map. They then had returned and had started to descend on the northern slopes of the mountain. Having reached a point about half a mile W. of the top of the mountain and about 500 ft. below the ridge on its N. slope,¹⁴ it seems as if they were traversing from E. to W. across a very steep rock face covered by snow, in order to reach a more possible line for the descent. The snow was not adhering properly to the rock, and we could see that a huge slab of it had given way, carrying them down an almost sheer slope of over 1000 ft. down to the glacier. Death must have been instantaneous, and there is absolutely no chance of either of the climbers having lived to reach the bottom of the slope because their heads were completely crushed in the fall. There is no question whatever that it was anything except an accident, and no blame can possibly be attached to anyone. The weather was extremely bad on Friday, with heavy rain and an extremely strong wind, and this probably assisted to cause, or actually did cause, the accident. Colonel Stoehr's watch, which was broken, had stopped at about 3 P.M. The minute hand is missing. Both climbers are said to have been extremely experienced on big mountains, and so are unlikely to have taken unjustifiable risks.

This ends the record of this most regrettable and very sad tragedy, in which two most valuable lives have been lost. Owing to the great pluck on the part of the coolies and to the most willing and efficient aid given by all Kashmir state officials on the return road, the bodies reached Pahlgam at about 7.45 P.M. on Monday night, having travelled 27 miles from camp at Panjtarni *via* Vaojan Pass, Shishram Nag, Zaijpal, Tanin or Tsandwar, Phraslun, etc.

A special word must be said in praise of the courtesy, kindness and sympathy shown by all the pilgrims who were met on the return journey to Pahlgam from Panjtarni. Of their own free will they cleared the road in every case and showed the utmost respect to the bodies on the stretchers, inquired sympathetically about the accident, and expressed their deepest sympathy with the relations of both gallant officers. The motor lorry met the bodies 2 miles N.E. of Pahlgam, and there they were placed by Colonel Wells and another doctor into two coffins very kindly prepared under the Governor of Kashmir's orders. Canon C. G. Stokoe met and accompanied the bodies in the motor lorry to Srinagar, travelling during the night, while Mrs. Burn travelled early on Tuesday morning at 5 A.M. in

¹² It was after lunch, according to another report.—*E. G.*

¹³ Not confirmed.—*E. G.*

¹⁴ There was no evidence of tracks, but Hadow tells me that there was no alternative route.—*E. G.*

His Highness's personal car, which he had kindly and most thoughtfully sent out from Srinagar and placed entirely at her disposal and at that of her intimate friends.

The funeral took place at 9 A.M. on Tuesday morning at the Srinagar European Cemetery at the Sheikh Bagh, and was very widely attended by many English people, and many beautiful wreaths and crosses and sprays were sent. The funeral service was conducted by the Reverend Canon C. G. Stokoe, Chaplain of Srinagar.

The heartfelt sympathy of myself and of all the people in Kashmir goes out to Mrs. Stoehr, to Mrs. Burn, and to all their relatives.

(Signed) K. C. HADOW, Major.

[To the above expressions of sympathy we would add those of all members of the Club.—*Editor, 'A.J.'*]

The Accident on Mt. McKinley.

DEATH came to our member Allen Carpe and his companion, Theodore Koven, on the Muldrow Glacier of Mt. McKinley on or about May 9, 1932.

The expedition, which left Seattle on April 16, was organized primarily for the purpose of carrying out certain cosmic ray observations for Professor A. H. Compton of Chicago. The other members were Nicholas Spadavecchia, Percy T. Olton and E. P. Beckwith, the latter also a member of the American Alpine Club.

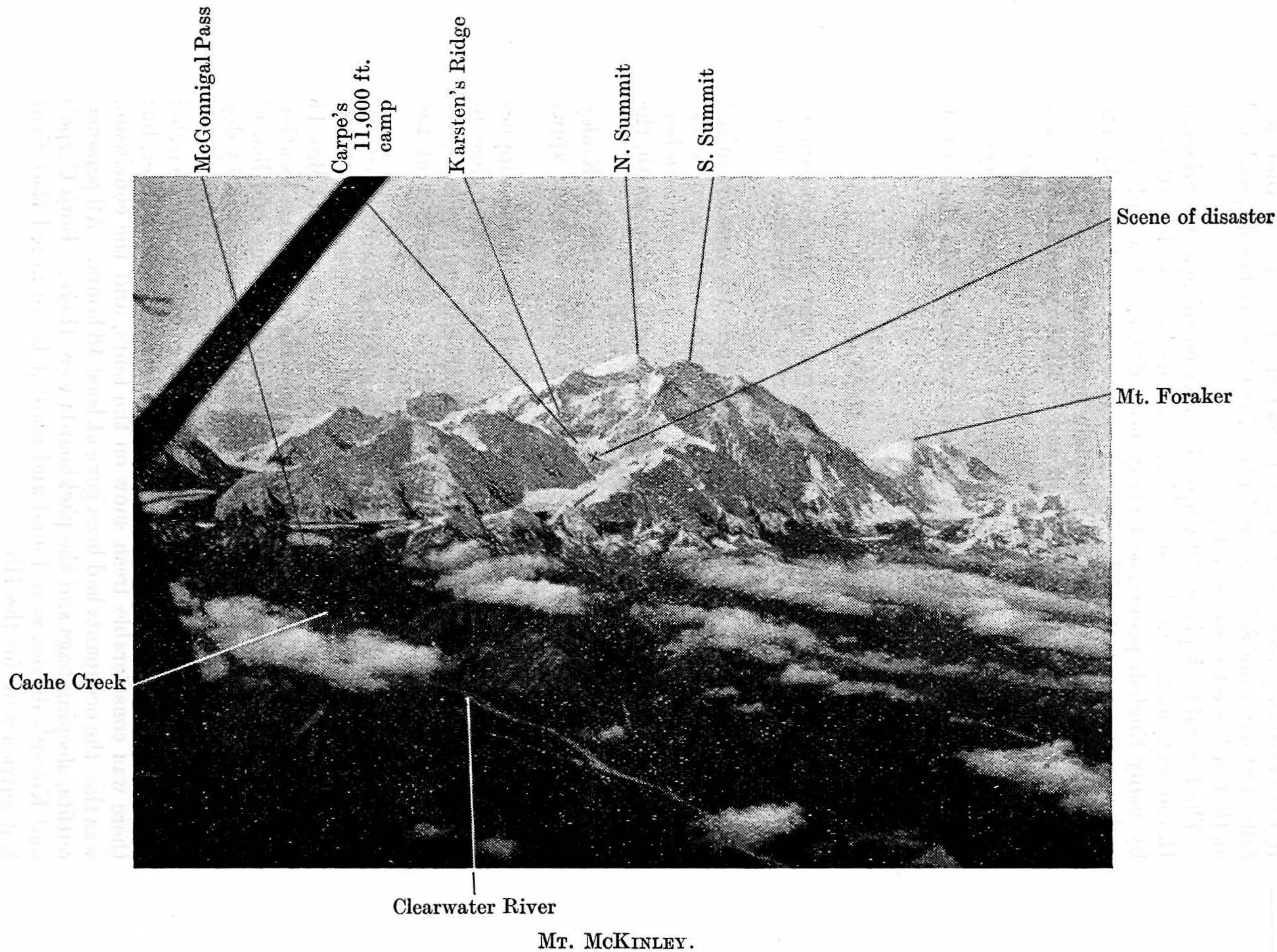
Whether or not some of them would attempt to climb Mt. McKinley was to be determined after their scientific experiments on the upper Muldrow Glacier had been concluded.

Several aeroplane trips carried the party and most of the supplies from Nenana to the 6000 ft. level on the Muldrow Glacier close to McGonnigal Pass (formerly known as McFee Pass), whence, by successive relays, Carpe and Koven established themselves at the head of the Muldrow at 11,000 ft. on May 2.

The party, composed of Alfred D. Lindley, Erling Strom, Harry J. Liek and Grant Pearson, having ascended both summits of Mt. McKinley, descended Karsten's Ridge in the early morning of May 11 to the tents of Allen Carpe and Theodore Koven, whose location they knew well, having freighted up and cached some 800 lbs. of equipment and scientific apparatus for them on their way in by dog teams.

Surprised at finding no one there, members of the party circled around the tents seeking traces. The camp was in perfect order, but there was considerable fresh snow on the tents, and the conclusion was that the occupants had been gone at least 48 hours. All personal outfits, sleeping bags and the packboards were there. Both Carpe's and Koven's diaries were found and read, it being noted that their last entries were for the 7th.

Carpe's diary of cosmic ray observations was not read by them,



MT. MCKINLEY.

and it was not until they had returned to New York that it was found to contain observations for several days, including the 8th, and one observation subsequent thereto for 6.30 A.M., presumably for the morning of the 9th. Thus the question presented itself as to whether Koven went off alone toward McGonnigal Pass on the 8th, and Carpe followed on the 9th. The omission of any entry in Koven's diary for the 8th is, however, not conclusive, and it is the opinion of Lindley and Strom, supported by the weight of the following evidence, that they went together on the 9th.

Having cooked a meal in their own tent and rested a little, the Lindley party set out down the glacier in their old tracks, still visible here and there. Occasional ski tracks were seen, and these were assumed to have been those of Carpe and Koven.

About one and a half miles below the 11,000 ft. camp the party came across the body of Koven exactly in their old trail and considerably snowed up. Liek and Pearson waited, while Lindley and Strom returned to the camp for the sledge that had been abandoned there. The body was then placed on the sledge, but they had scarcely dragged it a few hundred feet before Pearson fell into a crevasse, where he lodged some 40 ft. down, and was extricated with difficulty. They then buried the body in the snow wrapped in a tent and marked the spot with the upright sledge, roped up again and proceeded to follow Koven's wandering tracks. These led, in a few hundred yards, to a big crevasse slightly off the old trail, where it swung around an avalanche fan.

From the tracks still to be seen, it appeared that the first man had gone over safely and that the bridge had broken as the second man crossed. Lindley and Strom base their opinion on the fact that the ski tracks, which were of a side-stepping nature near the edge of the crevasse, were on the *lower* side; and they do not see how they could have been there unless he returned after his companion had fallen through. They feel quite certain that the second man fell in also, in his efforts to look into the crevasse and locate and assist the first man.

The fatal crevasse lay transversely to the general route, but it may not have been come upon at right angles. That the crevasse was bridged over before the accident is a matter of opinion, a probability that cannot be proven. Lindley and Strom describe it as a bad one, with overhanging edges that sloped downwards and dangerous of approach. It lay in an area of open and bridged-over crevasses, a little off to the left of the old trail.

An ice axe with a pair of crampons hanging on it was stuck on the inside end and lower side of the fatal open part of the crevasse. There were no marks on the ice axe that would indicate whose it was, nor was it certain that this was the point where Koven emerged from the crevasse, although it appears likely.

It is positive that one of the two was on skis, and it seems most probable that both were so equipped. They were not roped, one

rope having been cached at about 12,640 ft. on Karsten's Ridge, and the other being at the 6000 ft. camp. Which of the two, Carpe or Koven, fell in first cannot be determined, assuming that they were running together.

By this time it was evening, and all members of the Lindley-Strom party were very tired, two of them being quite done up. They called loudly into the crevasse, without receiving an answer, and knowing that the accident must have occurred more than 48 hours previously, they felt certain that Carpe could not be alive. Without venturing to approach the crevasse closely in order to look in, they then passed by it and continued down to the McGonnigal Pass camp, which they reached about 4 A.M. on the 12th. Thence they marched out to McKinley National Park, where they arrived on the 15th, and immediately sent an aeroplane in for the sick Beckwith and instituted search for the missing Spadavecchia.

While Spadavecchia and Olton were away freighting up the glacier, Beckwith, who had remained at the McGonnigal Pass camp indisposed, took a turn for the worse and was found to be seriously ill when they returned on the 9th. Accordingly, it was decided that Spadavecchia should leave on the 10th for the nearest telephone station of Stoneycreek to summon an aeroplane, or other form of transportation, while Olton remained with Beckwith.

On their way out to McKinley Park the Lindley party saw Spadavecchia's tracks several times but never met him, and on their arrival were disturbed to find that he had not been heard of. The aeroplane took Beckwith to the Fairbanks Hospital on the 16th, and search for Spadavecchia continued by aeroplane and rangers on foot for several days, before he was located back at the McGonnigal Pass camp, where he had returned after many days of hard marching on scant supplies and failing to reach his objective in the unknown hills and passes of the Clearwater and McKinley Rivers. Eventually rangers got into the McGonnigal Pass camp and brought him out safely. The record would not be complete without mentioning the fine work done by the Flyers Crosson, Jones and Robbins, of the Alaska Airway, in the rescue of Beckwith and the search for Spadavecchia.

I might add that Merl La Voy and Andrew M. Taylor (of the Am. A.C.), together with two Alaskans, recovered the body of Koven. The funeral was held on September 15 in Jersey City. Messrs. La Voy and Taylor, whom I saw just after their return, discovered no new facts concerning the disaster, but they retrieved Carpe's instruments and films from their 11,000 ft. camp. Six or seven feet of new snow had fallen in the interim.

To Messrs. Lindley, Strom, Liek and Pearson we extend heartiest congratulations on their successful ascent of both summits of Mt. McKinley, and sincere thanks for their action in connexion with the tragedy.

H. B. DE V. SCHWAB.